Hill House, Wigton

5th March 1907

The Wigton Urban District Council

Gentlemen

The vital statistics for 1906 shew a diminished nett mortality of 2.19 per thousand upon the average of the last ten years.

The total number of deaths registered in the district is 70 inclusive of 12 non-residents who died in the workhouse: upon an estimated population of 2356 these figures give a mortality of 19.68 per thousand of the population, but to arrive at the nett mortality the 12 non-residents must be deducted and one death of a resident who died in a public institution outside the district, added, this brings down the total deaths to 59 and the mortality to 16.59 per thousand.

24 of the 59 deaths were of persons who had attained the age of 65 years and upwards. 7 deaths were due to tubercular diseases, a death rate of 1.97 per thousand.

The number of deaths of infants under the age of one year compares favourably with 1905 and with the average of the last ten years, viz:- 9 against 17 and 15.8 respectively, the infant mortality being 111.11 per thousand births, the average for the last ten years 158.6.

There is a marked diminution in the number of births registered viz:- 81 for 1906 against 102 for 1905 and 100 the average of the last 10 years. this gives for 1906 the very low birth rate of 22.77 per thousand of the population. The rate for England and Wales for 1905, the latest available for comparison is 27.2.

An epidemic of measles visited the district in the early part of December, necessitating the closure of the elementary schools from the 12th December to the 21st January but no deaths from measles were registered during the year.

Ten cases of infectious disease were notified viz:- 7 of erysipelas and one each of scarlet fever, diphtheria and puerperal fever.

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As epidemic cerebro-spinal fever is prevalent in certain parts of the Kingdom I would advise you to adopt its inclusion, for a period of one year, in the list of diseases to be notified under the Notification Act.

I would remind you that we are not yet provided with an isolation hospital for infectious diseases and trust that arrangements may be made between you and adjoining authorities to provide the necessary accomodation.

We are to be congratulated upon the low infant mortality, it is to be hoped that the excellent nursing arrangements in vogue in the town, whereby a certain proportion of the mothers are instructed in the rational feeding of infants, are beginning to bear fruit.

With regard to the water supply, now that you have completed the work of relaying in iron the main between the source and the storage reservoir, thus eliminating the risk of access of surface water and also of leakage which with the earthenware pipes were unavoidable, we are in a satisfactory position both as regards quality and quantity.

The district is well sewered and drained the sewer being regularly flushed and kept in good order by the Surveyor, the outfall discharging on to a sewage farm of 15 acres which produces a satisfactory effluent, flowing into the river Waver.

The house accomodation is for the most part adequate and satisfactory from a sanitary point of view, but in a number of the poorer class of houses the ventilation is imperfect due to the houses having only one entrance, in consequence of which it is impossible for a current of air to pass through, this defect accompanied by a minimum of sunlight owing to a limitation of space about the houses, may in some measure account for the high phthisis mortality.

It would conduce to the health of the district of these structural defects were remedied as opportunities present themselves.

All plans for building operations are submitted to the Council and the Medical Officer and the work supervised by the Surveyor.

As the town is becoming more and more an Educational centre it is to be hoped that a demand for houses may spring up to stimulate building in the district.

The slaughter houses have been regularly and systematically inspected, they are kept clean and well ventilated, the offal being promptly removed.

The bakehouses, dairies and cowsheds have been systematically inspected and found satisfactory.

The common lodging houses are frequently inspected to prevent overcrowding, they are kept clean and regularly whitewashed.

The water carriage system of excrement disposal is universally employed and the house refuse is removed by the public scavengers at regular and short intervals.

In company with your Inspector I have visited the Factories and workshops of the district, and found them satisfactory, a defect of ventilation mentioned in my last Annual report has been remedied.

I enclose tables of statistics

Nos. I, III, IV, & V with Form 572

Factory and Workshop Act 1901.

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Gentlemen

Your Obedient Servant,

J. BLACKLOCK.